



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO
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13 Apr 01

Dear Colleagues:

Last week while serving on reserve selection boards, I heard about Chaplain Jim Vinson's death. The news jolted me and the other board members. We paused for prayer. Our priorities shifted. Promotion decisions suddenly seemed less paramount. Jim's death reminded everyone of life's brevity. We know not when God will summon us. We must stay faithful. I spoke at his memorial service on Monday, reminding congregants that one doesn't need to live long to live well and accomplish great things. Chaplain Vinson was such a man. Let's continue to pray for Wanda and the children.

Leaving Memphis, I learned of the death of the beloved father of Chaplain Dan Stevens. This hit close to home. My family and I ate Christmas dinner with Dan's family two years ago in Florida, getting to know his wonderful dad. Dan's father died surrounded by family and inspired by the blessed hope of this Easter season. He passionately loved God. I'll miss his laughter and faith.

And then there are more gentle transitions. Last week I was honored to attend Chaplain Charles Carter's retirement ceremony at Quantico. Charles has given special service to God and country. I spoke about the characteristics I most admire about him: gentleness, wisdom, professionalism, productivity, commitment, consistency, and humility. He is one of our Corps' legends. He'll be missed.

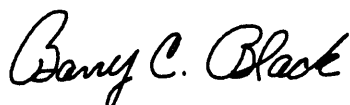
After the retirement ceremony, my wife and I flew to Los Angeles for another memorial service. A childhood friend asked me to give her eulogy. It seems unfair to lose her prematurely, but God's Word provides comfort for our grief: "We sorrow not as those who have no hope."

Finally, in a week where untimely deaths seemed to predominate, we learned of the passing of one who had lived eighty-five great years. Chaplain John Craven, the Navy chaplain who had seen more combat with Marines than any chaplain in American history, finished the good race. He enlisted in the Marines in 1933 and retired in 1973 after five years as The Chaplain, USMC.

Chaplain Craven's ministry in four Pacific campaigns in WW II and three in Korea was the material of legend. He was a chaplain who covered our Corps in glory and was faithful to the last breath. Life left him before honor did.

To close, let us all work to recruit the next generation of John Cravens. You should be very proud of your work in recruiting. Since the Senior Leadership Conference eight new chaplains have joined our ranks. These are the fruits of your labors. Chaplain Iasiello spent time in Italy and several new chaplains will be added because of that trip. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest field.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chief of Chaplains